

United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- + Co-Chairmen of Yugoslavia Conference, in report to Secretary-General, say package presented on 20 August should be "kept on the table" at Bosnia and Herzegovina peace talks; warn that conflict could intensify and expand, threatening humanitarian aid to civilians.
- + Secretary-General, in report on ONUSAL, says FMLN has been effectively dismantled and former combatants reintegrated into civil and political life in El Salvador.
- + United Nations owed \$1.9 billion by Member States, including \$1.1 billion for peace-keeping operations; only 10 States, out of total membership of 184, have paid dues in full.
- + African Seminar and NGO Symposium on Palestine describes developments in Israeli-Palestinian peace process as first step towards just and comprehensive peace based on Security Council resolutions.

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In the absence of any alternative, the "peace package" and associated agreements presented to the three Bosnian parties in Geneva on 20 August should be kept on the table, according to the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. In a report to the Secretary-General dated 1 September, Co-Chairmen Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen said the parties had a choice between a negotiated peace and a continuation of the war, which could even intensify and expand. If the war were to persist into the winter, it might be impossible to provide humanitarian aid to the civilian population in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The consequences, they said, could be devastating.

The Co-Chairmen pointed out that the personnel of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian workers were already facing unacceptable security risks. They said there was a risk that those organizations might not be able to continue their activities in a deteriorating situation.

(more)

The package presented on 20 August contained constitutional papers covering issues that had already been resolved and a map reflecting previous discussions. The peace talks resumed in Geneva last Tuesday, but broke down the following day because the parties could not agree on how to delineate a divided Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has said that, by all available indications, the military structure of the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) has now been effectively dismantled. In a report on the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) dated 30 August, the Secretary-General said the FMLN's former combatants had been reintegrated, within a framework of full legality, into the civil, institutional and political life of the country, as mandated in the Peace Accords for El Salvador. The overall process of verification and destruction of FMLN weapons and equipment was finally completed on 18 August.

The Secretary-General said that apprehensions raised by the discovery of large quantities of undeclared weapons still in FMLN possession now seemed to have been surmounted. Given the circumstances surrounding the bitter 12-year conflict in El Salvador, weapons and war-related matériel were likely to remain for some time in the hands of individuals or groups, including criminal ones. But, he said, the facts reported had brought into sharp focus the public's condemnation of armed groups, and the futility of arms as a viable means to achieve political aims.

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As of today, the United Nations is owed a total of \$1.9 billion by Member States, of which \$1.1 billion is owed for peace-keeping operations, according to a United Nations spokesman. Only 10 States, out of a total membership of 184, had paid their dues in full. The spokesman said recent receipts would tide the Organization over until the end of September, but warned that a crisis had not been averted.

Last week, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali announced that the servicing of conferences and meetings and the production of documents and records would be limited in order to cut costs. He said that the number of temporary staff hired for the General Assembly would be cut, and that the hiring of consultants and official travel by staff members would be curtailed.

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The African Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine this morning described the recent developments in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process as a first step towards a just and comprehensive peace based on the Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). In joint conclusions and recommendations issued as it concluded its week-long meeting Dakar, it said courage and leadership would be crucial in the next phase of the peace process.

(more)

The meeting, organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, reaffirmed that peace should be pursued through the realization of Palestinians' right to self-determination. Palestinians were urged to study the experience of the oppressed people of South Africa, whose struggle paralleled their own.

The revival of the Palestinian economy and its independent development were described as essential underpinnings of the building of a Palestinian state. The meeting also called for new coordination between donor organizations, the United Nations System and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

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